

\$2,521,864 in Grants Funded through Recovery Act
July 28, 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) announced today that the St. Bernard Parish Sheriff's Department has been awarded \$1,892,352 in federal funding to support the hiring or rehiring of 14 law enforcement officers. The St. Mary Parish Sheriff's Department has also been awarded \$629,512 to support hiring four new officers.

The funding is available through the federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Recovery Program, a competitive grant program that provides funding directly to law enforcement agencies to help create and preserve jobs and to increase their community policing capacity and crime-prevention efforts. The additional funding for grants was made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as the Stimulus Act or Recovery Act, which Rep. Melancon voted for in Congress.

"Our law enforcement officers are on the front lines in protecting our communities and responding to emergencies and disasters," said Rep. Melancon. "This Recovery Act funding will help the St. Bernard and St. Mary Sheriff's Departments add and retain the manpower needed to fight crime more effectively. Additionally, these federal grants will provide much needed support to state and local government budgets, helping to fill in the current shortfalls and ensure that critical law enforcement dollars are not slighted."

St. Bernard Parish Sheriff Jack Stephens said the \$1.8 million St. Bernard will receive to hire 14 new sheriff's deputies is particularly useful because the parish is still rebuilding from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, which caused the Sheriff's Office to lose personnel. Many officers left the parish after their homes were ruined and the parish lost a significant portion of its tax base because of the many businesses that haven't returned.

Sheriff Jack Stephens said, **"This grant is great news for us and we appreciate the help of our Congressional delegation, including Congressman Melancon and U.S. Senators Mary Landrieu and David Vitter. We had 400 employees before the storm and about 160 afterward. We have worked to rebuild our force and we are now employing about 280. Meanwhile, the number of arrests haven't significantly decreased, despite the smaller population."**

Sheriff Stephens continued, **"We don't have the tax base to afford 14 new deputies, and we could use them all. These people will go on the front lines with other deputies and increase our ability to suppress crime. It could make a significant impact for us."**

The grants announced today will provide 100 percent of the approved salary and benefits for entry level officer positions over a three year period. The local police departments receiving the grants will then be required to retain the grant funded positions for a fourth year.

When the new federal funding was announced in March, Congressman Melancon [encouraged all Louisiana law enforcement agencies to apply](#) for a share of the \$1 billion in COPS hiring grants. Today, 12 Louisiana law enforcement

agencies, including St. Bernard and St. Mary Sheriff's Departments, were awarded \$12,125,448 in Recovery Act funding to support 88 new officers (see attached document).

Congressman Melancon has been a strong supporter in Congress of law enforcement efforts that engage citizens in crime prevention, such as the COPS program. In addition to voting for the Recovery Act, last winter he also voted in support of the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, which provided annual funding for the COPS program. Among the local law enforcement initiatives that are supported by the COPS Program are: community policing development, methamphetamine enforcement, law enforcement technologies, "secure our schools" programs, and child sexual predator elimination programs.

For more information about the grants, or to learn which law enforcement agencies received funding, please visit www.cops.usdoj.gov .

#